



Florida Black Bear National Scenic Byway Newsletter

A good traveler has no fixed plans, and is not intent on arriving.

A small town with 9 Lives

The old timers who have lived in Astor all of their lives would say for a small town, it has a big name and is like a cat with 9 lives. It has thrived, died twice, and lives again all in the span of 150 years. A small community on the St. Johns, between two lakes Dexter and George has become a thriving metropolis. But as some would say it is experiencing a second rebirth as a sportsman's mecca. Ultra modern fish camps are everywhere and real estate in the woods that would never sell is being sold. It would seem everyone wants to be part of this metropolis.



Astor was the ambitious dreams of two financial giants – Moses and Levy. Moses was from a distinguished Portuguese-Jewish family, and William Astor, grandson of John Jacob Astor came from Germany in 1784 with just 50 cents in his pocket. When William Astor died at the age of 82 he was worth 30 million dollars.

Yet even though these pioneers had money, power and lived in a picturesque community the hunting and fishing grounds belonged to the fierce Timucuan Indians and later to the Seminoles.

In today's modern times we would call Moses and Levy pioneer developers of present day Astor. It was them that braved the terrors of Marla, wild beasts and pillaging Indians to establish a colony for oppressed Jews from Europe.

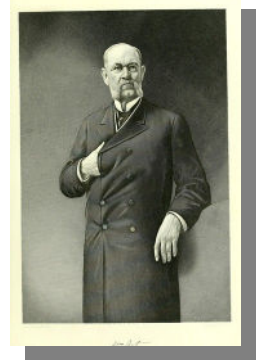
William Astor purchased 80,00 acres along the St. Johns River in 1874, which belonged to Moses Levy. At that time in 1874 the vast acreage was virgin forest and swamp lands that had no activity for three decades. Moses Levy's ill faded colony faded away.

William could see the potential in this land with hunting, fishing and excellent water routes. He must of also saw that there was an opportunity for a huge fortune. Soon after he purchased the land, he started an extensive building program, hotels, wharves, warehouses, purchased a railroad and a telegraph office opened.

It has been said that William hated the social life that surrounded his wife, and could not stand to be office bound like his brother John Jacob Astor III, whenever he got tired of the Ferncliff life he would retreat to his yacht, the Ambassador. When he visited Jacksonville he would live on his yacht because he disliked hotels.



Caroline Astor



William Astor Jr

Discover Wild Florida

Website

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Small Town – Continued

The story of his yacht goes this way. One day his yacht Ambassadors the largest yacht afloat at that time, got stuck on the bar at the mouth of the St Johns and Astor and engaged the Mabey and Oyster Bay tugs to tow her off. He complained bitterly that the bill was exorbitant, but yet finally paid it. He was so angry that the bill was so high well what do you think he did?? He was determined to get his own personal satisfaction so he went and brought his own tug, the Seth Low. He brought into the harbor and ordered it to tow all vessels in an out free of charge. Needless to say the towing company was not a happy camper.



Astors Yacht Ambassador

The owner of the tug boat company Dr. L'Engle decided the best thing he could do was to buy the offending boat. Astor agreed to the sale but insisted that Dr. L'Engle go to New York for it. Dr. L'Engle agreed to go to New York for the boat, and when the transaction closed Astor wrote across the bill "Dog eat dog".

To find out about the rest of the story stay tune to September Newsletter.

In the Know Cool TidBits

Crackers Florida Cowboys - Does anyone know what the chief tool was for a Florida Cowboy in the 18th Century. A strong whip, and when he cracked it to herd cattle along it sounded like a gunshot. These whips were 12 to 18 feet of braided buckskin fastened to a handle of 12-15 inches long. As a result of this sound, which sometimes resounded for several miles, these cowboys were called "crackers."

Jugged Rabbit Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Style

Cut rabbit in pieces. Place in deep pan and cover with red wine, to which is added one teaspoon whole cloves, one teaspoon allspice, two bay leaves, one teaspoon whole peppercorns.

Let stand in cool place for three days. Drain. Roll in salted and peppered flour. Brown in one quarter inch butter. Cover with hot water and simmer until tender. More hot water may be necessary.



Remove rabbit. Stir in one tablespoon flour dissolved in four tablespoons cold water for every cup of gravy.

Add one half teaspoon salt, dash of pepper. Pour over rabbit. One rabbit serves four to six.

That feeling of bliss that washes over you when you "get away from it all" isn't just in your head. Spending time in the great outdoors has been scientifically proven to reduce stress levels, help you find clarity, and rejuvenate your mind and body.

That is a wrap, till our paths cross again, stay safe.